

Marine (1897) Department.

G.O., No. 102 *man*

DATED 8th February 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

*Tutor in Port. Pros. Rev. Sept approving the
entertainment of an Ass^t Supdt of Customs
at the —, Com^d to the P. P. Office and the report
called for in the Pros: as to how it is proposed to alter
the Office hours of the Sea Customs Office at that port
so as to meet the requirements of the altered train
& Steamer Service awaited in his Sept ~~in Com^d~~
in connection with the question of the alteration of the Office
hours of the port establishment.*

*T.C.
8/2/97*

*Removed from
Sp. 396 *man*
29-4-97*

11/2/97

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
	396	Marine	29.4.97				

Current No. 151

Recd. { 4-2- } 1897.
Regd. { }
Recd 5-2-97

Spare copies 10

JANUARY.

1. Communicated to the Presidency Post office.

Y. 2. The report called for in para 3 will be awaited in the Marine Dept. where the question of altering the ~~transcript~~ office hours of the Establishment is lying over.

Tuticorin Port.

Approving the entertainment of an Assistant Superintendent of Customs at the station, transferring with remarks the proposition statement to the Financial Department for sanction; and calling for report from the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue) regarding the proposal for the transfer of the treasury work of the station to the Deputy Tahsildar.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—again G.O., R. No. 1983, Revenue, dated 26th October 1896.

ABSTRACT.—Referring to the Board of Revenue for very early report Proceedings, Marine Department, forwarding for consideration copies of papers regarding the alteration in the office hours of the Port of Tuticorin in view of the proposed accelerated train service between Madras and Tuticorin.

READ—also the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Separate Revenue), Mis. No. 4760, dated 16th November 1896 :—

Read—G.O., No. 1983, dated 26th October 1896.

Resolution—Mis. No. 4760, dated 16th November 1896.

The Board begs to submit its reply to the Government Order read above.

2. The additional work thrown on the Tuticorin Customs establishment, by the new arrangements regarding the earlier arrival of the mail steamers from Colombo, consists merely in attendance for the examination of passengers' baggage at an inconvenient hour in the morning. The total amount of work to be got through in the day remains the same, and as the agent's steam launch does not carry cargo, only passengers' baggage has now to be dealt with before the usual office hours. The Customs establishment at Tuticorin is, however, so utterly inadequate for the work it has to perform that the Board finds it impossible to make any arrangements for meeting the present difficulty without a considerable increase.

3. Since the daily line of steamers between Colombo and Tuticorin was established, the importance of the latter as an import port for foreign trade has been increasing very fast and promises to do so at a still more rapid rate in the future. The customs duty collected on imports has risen from Rs. 89,358 in 1894-95 to Rs. 1,15,675 in 1895-96, while Rs. 63,539 had been collected up to the end of October during the current year. Of these sums, Rs. 5,288 was collected as import duty on articles found in passengers' baggage in 1894-95, Rs. 6,487 in 1895-96 and Rs. 3,454 up to October in the current year. The following shows the position which Tuticorin occupies as regards the customs duty on imports compared with the other chief ports of the Presidency :—

Port.	Import duty.
Cocanada	Rs. 13,706
Negapatam	77,688
Tuticorin	1,15,675
Calicut	39,522
Cochin	44,378
Mangalore	21,307

Some of the other ports collect a large export duty on rice, but this is a simple matter to deal with compared with the levy of import duty on miscellaneous goods, the valuation of many of which for the assessment of duty requires much skill and experience. The figures given above, striking as they are, do not convey an adequate idea of the importance of the work of the Customs house at Tuticorin, for in Negapatam a large proportion of the import duty (Rs. 29,600) is collected on betel-nuts, and in Calicut and Cochin, Rs. 8,933 and Rs. 29,225 were realized on liquors, both of which are articles easily assessed. While in Tuticorin Rs. 43,511 were collected on piece-goods, one of the most difficult articles to assess properly. The import work of the Customs establishment at Tuticorin is consequently not only greatly in excess of that at any other outport as far as actual volume is concerned, but is of a far more

intricate and complicated description than elsewhere owing to nearly one-half being collected on passengers' baggage and piece-goods. In addition to this, the establishment of a daily service to Colombo affords facilities for smuggling which do not exist at any other port in India. It also appears to the Board that Tuticorin might easily, under lax supervision, become a great avenue for the influx of articles which contravene the Merchandise Marks Act including cases which have been rejected at the principal ports. Nothing would be simpler than to ship them to Colombo for re-export to Tuticorin by the daily service.

4. Proposals for the revision of the Customs establishment at Tuticorin have been recently sanctioned as part of the general scheme of Customs establishments for the Presidency (*vide* correspondence ending with G.O., No. 724, Financial, dated 30th October 1896). Unfortunately the Collector's report submitting his proposals regarding Tuticorin was despatched early in 1895 at a time when the importance of this rapidly-developing trade with Colombo had not attracted much notice and even the recently-sanctioned establishment appears to be far from adequate to the work now to be done. The sanctioned scale is as follows :—

	RS.
1 Superintendent	150
1 Clerk	25
1 „	20
3 Clerks	45
1 Shroff	15
1 Weigher	7
12 Peons	72
1 Masalchi	5
Total	339

The scale is faulty in not providing for more than one superior officer. Owing to the peculiar position of Tuticorin with a foreign country within a few hours' sail and passengers landing at all hours of the day,—the agent's launch has to make two trips to clear the steamer, and other passengers come across in native vessels—it appears to the Board absolutely necessary that there should always be a responsible Customs officer on duty capable of valuing goods and dealing with authority with any customs question which may arise. At present the whole of the examination of the baggage of the native passengers (about 250 per diem) is conducted by the Superintendent. It takes him a couple of hours at least to get through the passengers who are brought ashore by the launch on her first trip and yet the examination is necessarily of a very ineffective kind. The Board has no doubt but that many escape examination altogether, and these of course would be the men who had something to gain by evading it. The Superintendent gets no help to speak of from his subordinates in this work, as their time is fully occupied otherwise under the peculiar treasury arrangements which exist at Tuticorin. The treasury work of the district is done chiefly by the branch of the Bank of Madras at that station, but all the bank transactions have to pass through the Sea Customs treasury and are recorded in the accounts kept by it. The total sum dealt with by the Sea Customs treasury during the past year amounted to over 40 lakhs of rupees and included the following items according to a statement furnished to the Acting Commissioner by the Superintendent :—

	RS.	A.	P.
Customs receipts	1,29,491	12	2
Stamps	1,08,654	12	6
Salt receipts	4,89,521	15	0
Income-tax	23,996	7	10
Excise	42,578	4	11
Civil Court deposits	62,159	4	2
Municipal receipts	48,301	9	1
Postal receipts	67,205	0	0
Port „	62,001	10	6
Taluk remittances	29,93,948	2	9

Of course the labour involved in passing these sums through the accounts in connection with the actual receipt of cash by the Bank of Madras is trifling compared with dealing with these in the ordinary way, but the volume of work to be got through is still very large, and as regards the stamp transactions the actual issue has to be made

by the Customs Superintendent. It appears to the Board that arrangements should be made to relieve the Sea Customs establishment of this miscellaneous work. There is a Deputy Tahsildar on the spot which makes the present system all the more extraordinary.

5. The removal of these duties from the shoulders of the Superintendent would free him from much routine work and would allow of the service of a clerk or two provided under the new scale being dispensed with, but it would still leave the actual examination of goods and the assessment of duty in the hands of one man. The Board considers that it is out of the question to expect one officer to discharge these duties effectively, particularly when his time is occupied for about three hours daily in the examination of passengers' baggage, and when for the reasons given above, there is every reason to anticipate Tuticorin rapidly becoming a favourite port with offenders against the Customs laws, if it is not so already. It is of the opinion that he should have an Assistant Superintendent on Rs. 70, who should, if possible, be obtained from the Custom House in Madras so as to secure the services of a man with some practical knowledge of the examination of packages and the valuation of goods.

6. In accordance with the above remarks and suggestions the Board begs to submit a proposition statement herewith for the entertainment of an Assistant Superintendent on Rs. 70, dispensing at the same time, with the services of two of the clerks on Rs. 15. The latter proposal can, however, only be given effect to, if the treasury work is handed over to the Deputy Tahsildar.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) EDMUND MILLETT,
Assistant Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with a proposition statement in duplicate,
through the Accountant-General and with
enclosures, in original, returned.
Copy to the Collector of Tinnevely.

ORDER—No. 33, Revenue, dated 18th January 1897.

Miscellaneous.

In the circumstances reported, the Board's proposal for the entertainment of an Assistant Superintendent of Customs at the Tuticorin port on a pay of Rs. 70 *per mensem* is approved.

2. The suggestion in the concluding portion of the Board's Proceedings for the transfer of the treasury work of the station to the Deputy Tahsildar will be referred to the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue) for report, and pending final orders on this point the proposal to abolish two of the clerks of the Sea Customs office on Rs. 15 each will be held in abeyance. The saving shown in the proposition statement on this account will accordingly be omitted and the proposition statement, as thus modified, will be transferred to the Financial Department for sanction.

3. The Board of Revenue will report in what manner it proposes to alter the office hours of the Sea Customs office at the port so as to meet the requirements of the altered train and steamer service.

(True Extract.)

Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Financial Department, with proposition statement.
,, the Board of Revenue (Separate Revenue).
,, the Public Works Department (Railway).
,, the Marine Department.

Ext. Shaik Karim.
70 Copies.